



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

MENU >

Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility

Everyday Steps, Steps When Someone is Sick, and Considerations for Employers

Updated July 28, 2020

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How to clean and disinfect



Clean

- **Wear disposable gloves** to clean and disinfect.
- **Clean surfaces using soap and water, then use disinfectant.**
- Cleaning with soap and water **reduces number of germs, dirt and impurities** on the surface. **Disinfecting kills germs** on surfaces.
- **Practice routine cleaning** of frequently touched surfaces.
 - More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required based on level of use.
 - Surfaces and objects in public places, such as shopping carts and point of sale keypads should be cleaned and disinfected before each use.
- **High touch surfaces include:**
 - Tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.



Disinfect

- **Recommend use of EPA-registered household disinfectant** [↗](#) .
Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product.
Many products recommend:
 - Keeping surface wet for a period of time (see product label).
 - Precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Always read and follow the directions on the label to ensure safe and effective use.

- Wear skin protection and consider eye protection for potential splash hazards
- Ensure adequate ventilation
- Use no more than the amount recommended on the label
- Use water at room temperature for dilution (unless stated otherwise on the label)
- Avoid mixing chemical products
- Label diluted cleaning solutions
- Store and use chemicals out of the reach of children and pets

You should never eat, drink, breathe or inject these products into your body or apply directly to your skin as they can cause serious harm. Do not wipe or bathe pets with these products or any other products that are not approved for animal use.

See [EPA's 6 steps for Safe and Effective Disinfectant Use](#) 

Special considerations should be made for people with asthma and they should not be present when cleaning and disinfecting is happening as this can trigger asthma exacerbations. Learn more about [reducing asthma triggers](#).

- **Diluted household bleach solutions may also be used** if appropriate for the surface.
 - Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection and has a sodium hypochlorite concentration of 5%–6%. Ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Some bleaches, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing or for whitening may not be suitable for disinfection.
 - Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted. **Follow manufacturer's instructions** for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. **Leave solution** on the surface for **at least 1 minute**.

To make a bleach solution, mix:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of room temperature water
OR
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of room temperature water
- Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.
 - **Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol may also be used.**




Soft surfaces

For soft surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes

- **Clean the surface using soap and water** or with cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces.
- **Laundry items** (if possible) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.

OR

- **Disinfect with an EPA-registered household disinfectant.** [These disinfectants](#)  meet EPA's criteria for use against COVID-19.
- **Vacuum as usual.**



Electronics

For electronics, such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines

- Consider putting a **wipeable cover** on electronics.
- **Follow manufacturer's instruction** for cleaning and disinfecting.
 - If no guidance, **use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol.** Dry surface thoroughly.




Laundry

For clothing, towels, linens and other items

- Launder items according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- **Wear disposable gloves** when handling dirty laundry from a person who is sick.
- Dirty laundry from a person who is sick can be washed with other people's items.
- **Do not shake** dirty laundry.
- Clean and **disinfect clothes hampers** according to guidance above for surfaces.
- Remove gloves, and wash hands right away.



Cleaning and disinfecting your building or facility if someone is sick

- **Close off areas** used by the person who is sick.
 - Companies do not necessarily need to close operations, if they can close off affected areas.
- **Open outside doors and windows** to increase air circulation in the area.
- **Wait 24 hours** before you clean or disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Clean and disinfect **all areas used by the person who is sick**, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines.
- **Vacuum the space if needed.** Use a vacuum equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, if available.
 - Do not vacuum a room or space that has people in it. Wait until the room or space is empty to vacuum, such as at night, for common spaces, or during the day for private rooms.
 - Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect. For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floors or rugs, clean the surface with detergents or cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces, according to the textile's label. After cleaning, disinfect with an appropriate EPA-registered disinfectant on [List N: Disinfectants for use against SARS-CoV-2](#) . Soft and porous materials, like carpet, are generally not as easy to disinfect as hard and non-porous surfaces. EPA has listed a limited number of products approved for disinfection for use on soft and porous materials on List N. Follow the disinfectant manufacturer's safety instructions (such as wearing gloves and ensuring adequate ventilation), concentration level, application method and contact time. Allow sufficient drying time if vacuum is not intended for wet surfaces.
 - Temporarily turn off in-room, window-mounted, or on-wall recirculation HVAC to avoid contamination of the HVAC units.
 - Do NOT deactivate central HVAC systems. These systems tend to provide better filtration capabilities and introduce outdoor air into the areas that they serve.
 - Consider temporarily turning off room fans and the central HVAC system that services the room or space, so that particles that escape from vacuuming will not circulate throughout the facility.
- Once area has been **appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for use.**
 - **Workers without close contact** with the person who is sick can return to work immediately after disinfection.
- If **more than 7 days** since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
 - Continue routine cleaning and disinfection. This includes everyday practices that businesses and communities normally use to maintain a healthy environment.



Cleaning and disinfecting outdoor areas

- Outdoor areas, like **playgrounds in schools and parks** generally require **normal routine cleaning**, but **do not require disinfection**.
 - Do not spray disinfectant on outdoor playgrounds- it is not an efficient use of supplies and is not proven to reduce risk of COVID-19 to the public.
 - High touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars and railings should be cleaned routinely.
 - Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces (play structures, benches, tables) or groundcovers (mulch, sand) is not recommended.
- **Sidewalks and roads should not be disinfected.**
 - Spread of COVID-19 from these surfaces is very low and disinfection is not effective.



When cleaning

- **Regular cleaning staff** can clean and disinfect community spaces.
 - Ensure they are trained on appropriate use of cleaning and disinfection chemicals.
- **Wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash.**
 - Additional personal protective equipment (PPE) might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.
 - Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area.
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for 20 seconds.
 - Always wash immediately after removing gloves and after contact with a person who is sick.
 - Hand sanitizer: If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.

Always read and follow the directions on the label to ensure safe and effective use.

- Keep hand sanitizers away from fire or flame
- For children under six years of age, hand sanitizer should be used with adult supervision
- Always store hand sanitizer out of reach of children and pets

See [FDA's Tips for Safe Sanitizer Use](#) and [CDC's Hand Sanitizer Use Considerations](#)

- **Additional key times to wash hands** include:
 - After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - After using the restroom.
 - Before eating or preparing food.
 - After contact with animals or pets.
 - Before and after providing routine care for another person who needs assistance (e.g., a child).



Additional considerations for employers

- **Educate workers** performing cleaning, laundry, and trash pick-up to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19.
- Provide instructions on what to do if they develop [symptoms](#) within 14 days after their last possible exposure to the virus.
- **Develop policies for worker protection and provide training** to all cleaning staff on site prior to providing cleaning tasks.
 - Training should include when to use PPE, what PPE is necessary, how to properly don (put on), use, and doff (take off) PPE, and how to properly dispose of PPE.
- Ensure workers are trained on the hazards of the cleaning chemicals used in the workplace in accordance with OSHA's Hazard Communication standard ([29 CFR 1910.1200](#) [↗](#)).
- **Comply with OSHA's standards** on Bloodborne Pathogens ([29 CFR 1910.1030](#) [↗](#)), including proper disposal of regulated waste, and PPE ([29 CFR 1910.132](#) [↗](#)).



Alternative disinfection methods

- The efficacy of alternative disinfection methods, such as ultrasonic waves, high intensity UV radiation, and LED blue light against COVID-19 virus is not known.
 - EPA does not routinely review the safety or efficacy of pesticidal devices, such as UV lights, LED lights, or ultrasonic devices. Therefore, EPA cannot confirm whether, or under what circumstances, such products might be effective against the spread of COVID-19.
- CDC does not recommend the use of sanitizing tunnels. There is no evidence that they are effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19. Chemicals used in sanitizing tunnels could cause skin, eye, or respiratory irritation or damage.
- CDC only recommends use of the [surface disinfectants identified on List N](#) [↗](#) against the virus that causes COVID-19.



For facilities that house people overnight

- Follow CDC's guidance for [colleges and universities](#). Work with state and local health officials to determine the best way to isolate people who are sick and if temporary housing is needed.
- For guidance on cleaning and disinfecting the bedroom/bathroom for someone who is sick, review CDC's guidance on [disinfecting your home if someone is sick](#).

More details: [Detailed Disinfection Guidance for Community Facilities](#)

More information

[Transport Vehicles](#)

Last Updated July 28, 2020

Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\)](#), [Division of Viral Diseases](#)